

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Libby Rod and Gun Club

2. Type of Proposed Action: This proposal is in two phases. Phase 1 – Construction of a combination clay shooting field, improved handicapped access and other miscellaneous construction & maintenance on the existing facilities (matching fund projects). Phase 2 - Construction of a 24'X42' multi-purpose building which is funded by FWP. (See figure 2 and para. 10).

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Libby Range, also known as the Airport Shooting Complex, is located across from the Libby airport on a Farm to Market road approximately 8 miles from the Libby town center. The address is 4635 Farm to Market Road, Libby, MT 59923. The shooting range property is permitted from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service in the Kootenai National Forest. The forest service permit is for 26.10 acres and is described as: Sec. 7, T. 29 N., R4. 31 W., P.M.MT. (See Figure 1, para. 7 Map and Figure 2).

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

5. Need for the Action(s): Increasing local demand on the club necessitates the expansion of both phase 1 & 2 projects, in addition to rectifying the deterioration of some existing features. Phase 1 projects are not being funded by FWP, but are listed here as part of the matching fund proposal package to support Phase 2. Phase 1 will build new combination clay shooting field, upgrade facilities for handicapped access, provide other initial work supporting the overall range maintenance and improvement (See para 10). Phase 2 - The building of a new Multi-Use clubhouse, necessary for the multiple users of the shooting complex and the increasing number of shooters and shooting events in the area. There is a need for improved training, education, administrative and storage space to accommodate the increasing and varied uses of the facilities. There is also a need for a facility to provide a comfortable secure location for spectators and shooters during club events.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The objective is to provide increased opportunity to participate in safe organized and efficient operations with increased shooting opportunities. Additional combination trap/skeet ranges, handicapped access and toilet to support increased range use. The larger more usable clubhouse is necessary to accommodate the increasing numbers of users and shooting activities. This will ultimately

result in a better training or educational environment for the club, other user organizations, law enforcement, hunter education, and the public. The new clubhouse will provide shelter from the weather and improved safety and efficiency of the range. The new facility will be fully handicapped assessable.

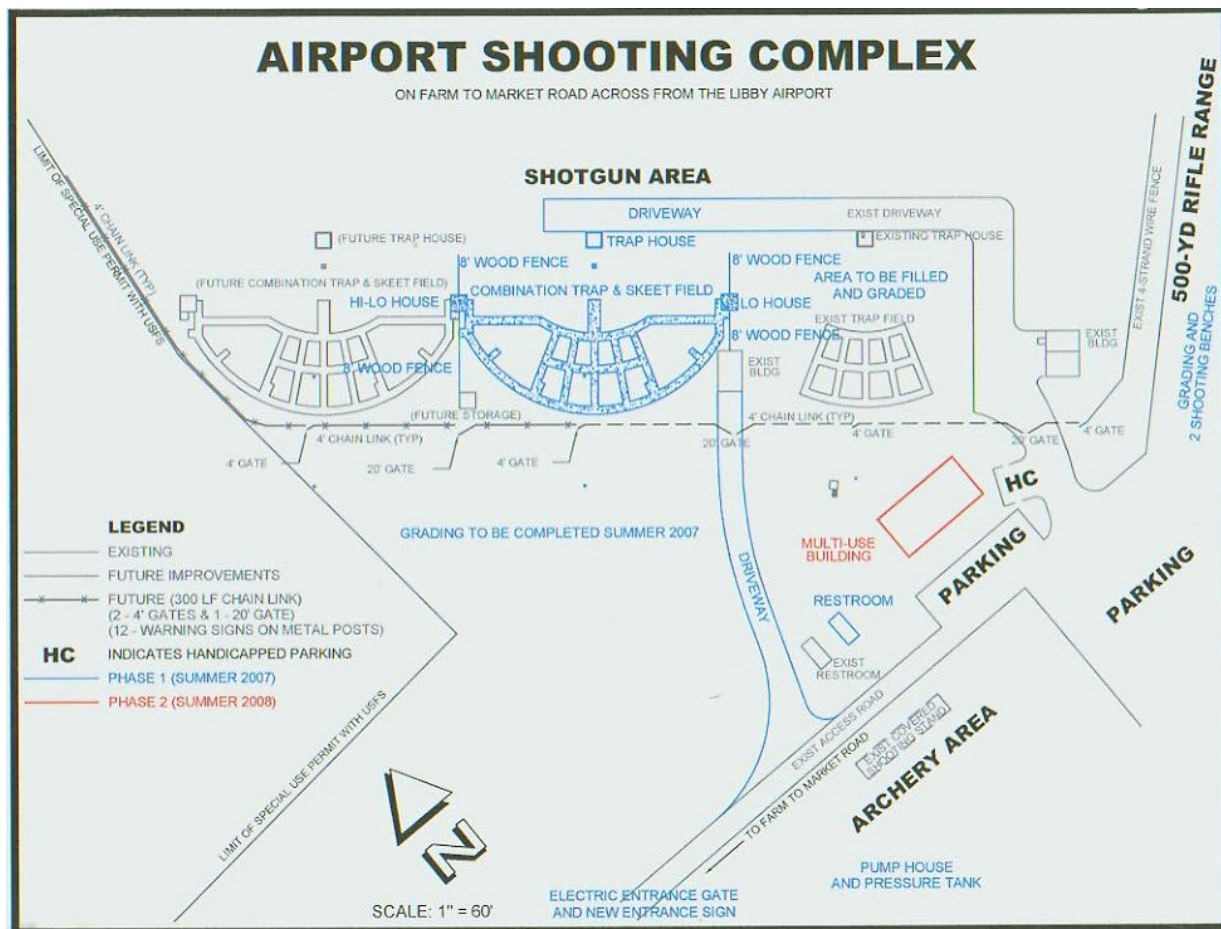
7. Map:



Figure 1 - Libby Rod & Gun Club Area Map

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

Range is approximately 26.10 acres, but improvements are limited to a much smaller area with proposed range enhancements (See Figure 2 below).



9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The area affected is the existing Libby Rod & Gun Club on 26.10 acres in the Kootenai National Forest adjacent to the Libby Airport. The range has had an ongoing permit for the shooting range complex from the Forest Service to the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. The range is surrounded on three sides by the national forest and a farm to market road and the Libby airport on the fourth side (See Figure 3 below). The nearest inhabited residence is about ½ mile away.



Figure 3 – Lincoln County Firearms Range (Libby Rod & Gun Club) Permitted Area

10. Description of Project: Phase 1 – Construct a combination clay shooting field consisting of two skeet (high & low) houses, and an additional trap house. This includes the associated grading, the concrete work for the trap house and slabs for the skeet houses, in addition to all the electrical and other miscellaneous materials necessary to support the construction. Phase 1 also includes the construction of wheelchair friendly shooting stations and access ways, and the addition of a handicap friendly toilet and improvements to the caretaker area. Additional fencing and grading/excavation for new rifle shooting areas, plus benches, fences, signing, water drainage and access road improvements. Phase 1 activities are the portion of the matching funds to support the FWP funded Phase 2. Phase 2 - Standard construction of a 24'X42' multi-purpose building as shown in Figure 4, below. Building will be handicapped accessible. Inspection by the Lincoln County Sanitarian approved the Septic system. Electrical improvements made during pre and post expansion projects were/are carried out under permit through licensed electricians. (See figure 2, where phase 1 improvements are highlighted in blue and phase 2 are in red). USDA Forest Service has also provided 20' of 18" culverts for drainage under the roadway.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2009.

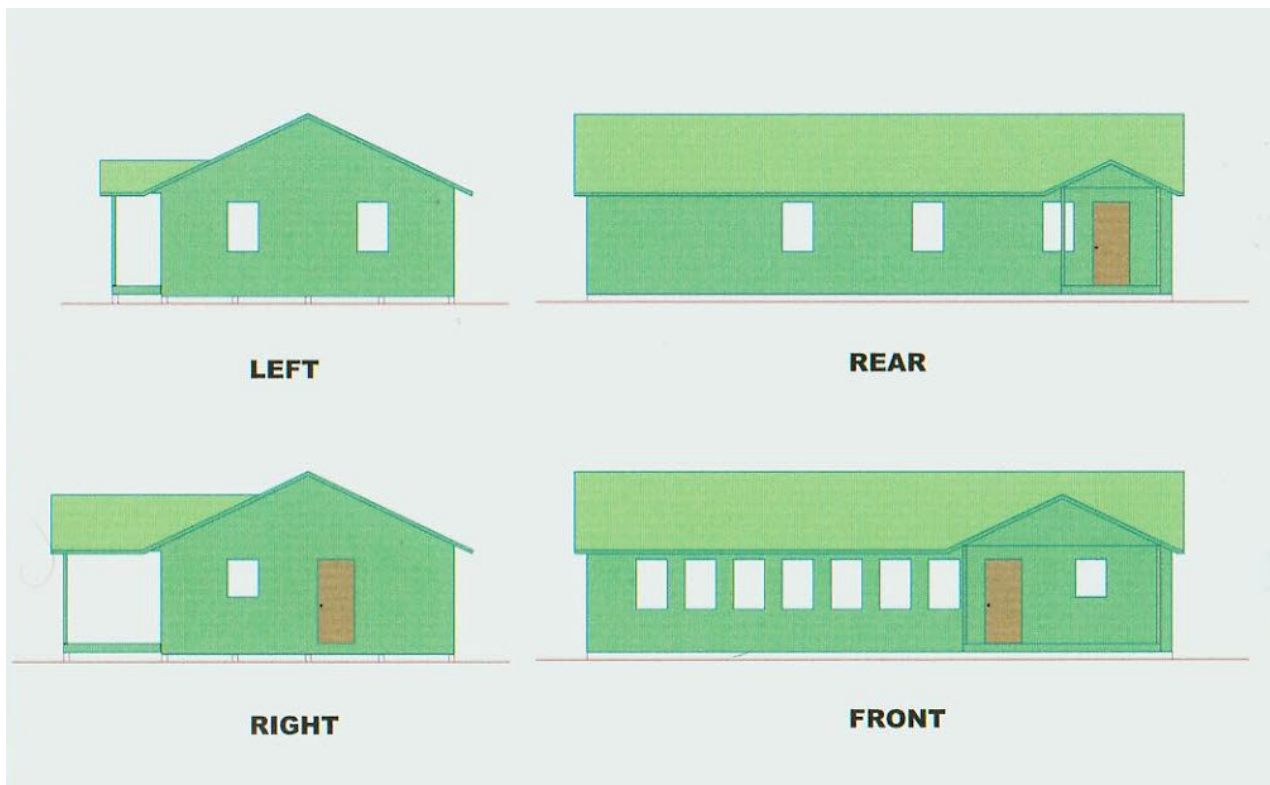


Figure 4 - New Multi-Use Building Proposal

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit
Lincoln County	Septic System

Electrical improvements made during pre and post expansion projects were/are carried out under permit through licensed electricians.

Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$40,192
Friends of the NRA	\$17,080
Resources Advisory Committee	\$17,000
USDA Forest Service (culverts)	\$ 1,179

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: The Libby Rod & Gun Club, Libby Scatterguns, Libby Archery Club and Libby Muzzleloaders. All of the various groups run seasonal leagues and shoots. The rod & gun club also sponsors Hunter Education classes on the range. The range is a public range aggressively managed by a non-profit and is open to the public seven days per

week, year round.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors. Additionally the project has been discussed with the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners and the Kootenai National Forest.

On October 8, 2002 a meeting was convened with the Lincoln County Commissioners, US Forest Service and interested private parties to discuss the Libby Airport Range issues and proposals for improvements. This meeting also facilitated addressing a complaint about night shooting. This meeting was promoted in the local newspapers and encouraged any interested party to attend. The most substantive result of the meeting was the appointment of Mr. Don Clark (the current Club President) to chair a steering committee to improve range conditions for shooters and neighbors. The steering committee introduced several proposals that included setting aside an area for a caretaker at the range to regulate hours via access gate closures and openings. Additionally, the Libby Rod and Gun Club secured a \$45,000 R.A.C. grant for infrastructure improvement to install bathrooms, shelters over shooting positions, benches, cement and grading work. Mr. Clark also did some follow up work with Lincoln County and private parties, including the original complainant on the night shooting, to assure all individuals were satisfied with the efforts of the Rod and Gun Club.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Don Clark, 319 Warren Rd., Libby, MT 59923, (406) 293-7659

16. Other Pertinent Information: The Libby Rod & Gun club has been in existence for 108 years. They are affiliated with the National Rifle Association and the Montana Wildlife Federation. The shooting range is permitted by the Forest Service to the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners. The Forest Service permit was reissued last year in order to allow an expansion of approximately 5 acres to accommodate the new shotgun sporting fields proposed by the club who manage the current trap range. In that case, an E.I.S. was conducted that compliments the original E.I.S. issued for the rifle range. Phase 1 projects are not funded by FWP only the Phase 2 project. However, Phase 1 is the matching funds and in-kind labor to support the Phase 2 grant. Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 23, 2007

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		#9
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. Formerly the area was forest service multiple use area growing timber. Current use: On 3 sides, is still Forest Service timbered land, and the fourth side is the Lincoln County Airport.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting. Additionally the range has a full time caretaker and seasonal hours for shooting have been established to minimize any noise problems with neighbors.

9. The facility is the USFS Helitack building located approximately 400 yards away, 180 degrees from the direction any firearm would be pointed. The nearest inhabited building or private residence is approximately 0.5 miles from the range.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) Build a combination clay-shooting field and construct a 24'X42' multi-purpose building.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active shooting range.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of alternatives **A** to provide an improved and larger clubhouse to accommodate meetings, training and administrative functions of the affiliated shooting organizations, the general public, other community organizations, law enforcement, and both Bow Hunter and Hunter education.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to build a new clubhouse and the range would continue without the proposed multi-use building. Land use would remain the same. Present activities of the shooting complex without the proposed improvements would continue. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Don Clark, 319 Warren Rd., Libby, MT 59923

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties permitted from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service to the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners and operated by the Libby Rod & Gun Club. The increased recreational opportunities, the low impact activities proposed, and the approval of both the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners and the Forest Service indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The 108-year history of the Libby Rod and Gun Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the construction of the Multi-Use building proposal outlined in Para. 2 & 10.

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Date Completed: September 7, 2007

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:
None required.

Describe public involvement, if any:
See Part I, paragraphs 13 and 16.